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SYMPATHY AS AN ART

MRS. FRANK LESLIE SUGGESTS A SO-
CIAL REVOLUTION.The Fellow Feeling That Preserves Golden
Silence—Sorrow More Cruel Than
Death—The Unselfish but Unwise Love.
A Brilliant Woman's Suggestions.[Copyright, 1933, by American Press Asso-
ciation. All rights reserved.]

I DON'T know any circumstance
of social life so "trying to men's
souls" on both sides as the cir-
cumstance demanding sympathy.

Death is bad enough, but it is
by no means the worst. Most of us have
been through that dark and terrible hour
when that which seemed our all has been
laid away from our sight and from
among men, and our friends have come
dressed in somber clothes, and with som-
ber and set countenances have one by
one insisted upon laying bare the wound
we would fain hide under our mourning
garb and expressing more or less crudely,
more or less delicately, the sympathy
of which they have come to assure us.

It is a social necessity that they should
come. We should feel surprised and
slighted if they did not, and we do not
dream of shirking the painful duty either
of receiving or of paying visits of con-
dolence, and yet I often wonder if it would
not be well to induce a social revolution
wherein this and several other time-hon-
ored customs should be swept away.

Time honored indeed, for speaking of
this matter the other day to a friend I
was told that when Job fell into affliction
his three friends at once made an
appointment to meet and make a collec-
tive call of condolence. But—and here
please observe the superiority of discre-
tion in the days of Job compared with
ours—having arrived with Job they sat
down upon the ground, and for seven
days and nights nobody spoke a word!

Now, we don't have time in this era to
sit in silence seven days and nights in
the presence of our friends, but I often
think if our custom was to go and sit
seven minutes, more or less, beside our
friend and then go away with a mute
carpet or clasp of the hand, how much
better it would be than to try to say
something, and that generally the wrong
thing. I shall never forget a dear little
unconventional widow whom I went to
see just after the sudden and shocking
death of her young husband.

"It was so good of you to come, but,
oh, don't say a word—not one word!"
gasped she, and I almost literally com-
piled.

Yes, bereavement is bad enough, and
to very few, if to any, is it given to speak
the words of comfort or reassurance.
But there are sorrows far more cruel
than death; there are bereavements sud-
den and more hopeless than those of the
grave, and it is in these that sympathy
may indeed despair of fully expressing
itself, even by sitting silent seven days
and nights in its presence.

A man in some prominent position of
trust becomes a defaulter and runs
away, leaving his wife and family to
bear the shame and notoriety of his
crime, perhaps leaving them in poverty
and debt as well, for very few criminals
commit but one kind of sin. A defaulter
is usually intensely selfish and considers
his own desires so exclusively that he
not only appropriates money not his
own, but his neighbor's wife as well, and
is utterly callous as to the suffering of
all sorts to which he condemns the wom-
an lawfully his own.

Now, what sympathy can one express
to such a mourner as that wife? What
word would seem other than presump-
tuous and intrusive to such bereave-
ment? And yet we all do feel sorry for
her; we all do long to let her know it
and to comfort her.

Some of us who have struggled in deep
waters ourselves shrink from the at-
tempt and contrive some other mode of
showing the true sympathy we feel, and
yet there is grief so deeply dyed with
shame that positively no notice should
be taken of it—even a box of flowers,
even a new book or a card, would serve
to hint at condolence too strongly, and
we remember that though speech is sil-
vern silence is often golden.

But yet again there are griefs even
deeper and more sensitive than that of
the insulted and deserted wife; there is
an agony of shame not to be shifted to
other shoulders than one's own; there
is a bereavement known to all the
world, and yet which the sufferer would
fain hide from even her own eyes, and
this is when a woman has too readily
yielded up her affections to one who sim-
ply amused himself with her easy cred-
ulity, and when her devotion began to
pall "he kissed and rode away." Every
one in her little world knows the whole
story. The malicious whisper: "Well,
she threw herself at his head. What could
she expect?" The kinder hearted ones
murmur: "Poor thing! I was afraid he
didn't mean anything." And the sharp-
est sting of her mortification is that she
knows that they all know and are scorn-
ing at her or pitying her. Still she can
bear it so long as nobody says anything,
but they will!

There are sure to be at least two or
three well meaning fools who want
"to express their sympathy," who in fact in-
sist upon doing so in spite of all the

wiggles and pantings of their victim—as
helpless as a frog under a crocheted stick,
or a cruel boy at the other end, or,
more appropriately, a frog in the clutches
of a vivisectionist, who is determined to
lay open the throbbings of poor froggie's
heart in the interests of humanity! This
sympathizer hides her time. She waits
until she can pin her victim in a corner,
or penetrate to her bedroom, or get her
into a victoria or a buggy where no in-
terruption is possible, and then she be-
gins: "My dear child, I want to tell you
how dreadfully sorry I am for your dis-
appointment, but how came you to sup-
pose Mr. Smith was serious in his atten-
tions? Tell me all about it, dear. It will
comfort your poor heart to speak out.
Did the man ever really ask you to
marry him?" And so on until the de-
serted damsel is ready to fling herself
out of the vehicle under the horse's feet
and feels that the loss of her lover is as
nothing compared with the shame of being
pitted and sympathized with.

Or take the case of a man who has
been horsewhipped or kicked or slapped
in the face by another man stronger and
bigger and therefore braver than him-
self. He doesn't want to know that his
friends are sorry for him! He would
much rather be suffered to imagine that
they hadn't heard of it, and yet there are
plenty of thick skinned idiots who will
on the first opportunity rush up to him
with outstretched hand:

"My dear fellow, I want to tell you
how indignant I am at the way that
brute treated you! Fairly kicked you
down the steps of the clubhouse, they
tell me! Just like these great hulking
beasts who think, because they are big
and strong, a little fellow like you or me
must give in to all their insolence!"

Probably the man thus apostrophized
at once measures the other "little fel-
low" with his eye and mentally decides
that he can thrash him at least and will
do so on the first opportunity.

Among my acquaintances on one side
or the other of the water I am proud to
include a lady whose father was hung,
and justly so, for murder. Of course the
most of her friends painfully avoided
any subject within rifle shot of the
subject, but I heard that more than one
well meaning person had attempted to
sympathize with her and thereby nearly
drove the poor woman to madness.

Or think of a mother whose son has
committed some shameful crime and is
either a fugitive from justice or is suffer-
ing her penalties. Fancy any sympathy,
even the most delicate being anything
but an offense to such a sufferer. In
fact, there is no love upon whose death
it is not safer to count than upon that of
a mother. It is positively indestructible,
and I have never found any other class
of love to which that word would apply.

Certainly some wives have loved some
husbands, some maidens have loved some
lovers, some women have loved some
men "not wisely, but too well," through
good report and ill, through fortune and
misfortune, cruelty and kindness, faith-
fulness and unfaithfulness, even to the
bitter end, but this unreasoning con-
stancy cannot be predicted of wives or
fiances or mistresses as a rule. Much
depends upon the individual.

But in the case of mothers it is the
rule, especially as regards her sons. The
bad boy may develop into the unmiti-
gated scamp, the profligate, the villain,
the jailbird, but though she may be
driven to discard him, to banish him
from her sight, to declare that she no
longer calls him son, there is always at
the core of her heart an undying flame of
love, a divine forgiveness and pity and
longing that she could not if she would
quench or destroy. Let the sinner but
reach his mother's feet, let him never so
clumsily plead, "Mother, I have sinned—
oh, forgive me!" and his pardon is as-
sured. Even though her judgment, her
reason, her conscience, sternly condemn
him, that mother love of hers will rise up
and drown them all in the torrent of its
deathless force.

In the Scripture story it is set forth as
a memorable thing that the father of
the prodigal son forgave him. It is not
even mentioned that his mother did, for
not to be irrelevant, "that goes without
saying." Doubtless she had forgiven him
long before he set out for home, and
indeed it is probable enough that it was
the telepathy of her love and forgiveness
that induced him to relinquish his foul
living and return.

Well, then, is it not obvious that with
such love as this in the background no
mother will patiently accept sympathy for
her son's misdeeds? It will only anger
her and rouse her to defend him even
though no defense be possible. If she is
a womanish sort of woman, she will prob-
ably adopt the "tu quoque" form of re-
sentment and say: "Yes, I know Harry
has done a foolish thing, but it arose en-
tirely from his desire to help and shield
a friend. You must remember all young
men are not like your John, always con-
sidering what is best for his own inter-
ests."

If she is not womanish, but womanly,
the best you can expect is, "Thank you,
but this is a subject upon which I do not
wish to talk."

I was once speaking with a lady in
London whose son had just been pursued
and brought back from the continent
under a charge of aggravated breach of
trust when another lady came up and
took her hand with a murmur of "Dear
Mrs. Blank, I want to tell you how sorry
I am!" "What! You have heard of it
already?" exclaimed Mrs. Blank, with a
smile like the flash of a bayonet. Then
half turning to me she continued: "I
have lost my coachman, you know. Ac-
tually the poor fellow dropped dead in
the stables this morning, and I am per-
fectly heartbroken. The best old soul
that ever held a whip. He was my
father's coachman and actually put me
on the first pony I ever rode. But I
can't think how you heard of it so soon,
my dear, except that I believe you make
it a point to gather every bit of news
that is stirring, don't you?" And with
this neat little blow in the face Mrs.
Blank sailed away, leaving her would be
sympathizer gasping.

But there is no need of swelling the
list of cases where the true sympathy is
expressed by apparent ignorance of
any cause for sympathy. Every person

of delicacy or a sensitive organization
will recognize such cases for themselves,
with a to those who are not delicate and
sensitive in their own personality no
amount of teaching will effect the ob-
ject. You cannot train a rhinoceros into
a thin skinned Arab steed, nor a cactus
into a sensitive plant. Most people and
most things die very much what they
are born, and the clumsy sympathizers no
doubt will exist when the world ceases,
just as it did when it began to be.

But there are cases, and plenty of
them, where true and tender sympathy
is like the very dew of heaven upon the
parched and drooping flowers. There
are tender souls that long for sympathy,
just as a little child holds up its hurt
finger for every one to "kiss and make
well." To such persons, and to sorrow
of the ordinary outspoken sort, with no
tinge of shame about it, let us give sym-
pathy with a free and generous hand.
But, above all, let it be the right kind
of sympathy. It is in many cases, if not
in all, more blessed to give than to re-
ceive, and this applies to gifts of sym-
pathy quite as much as to more tangible
matters.

I once knew a lady who said she had
been to church all her life, but had not
been able to acquire grace sufficient to
enjoy being pitied by anybody for any-
thing. Of course this was pride, and
pride is naughty, but very universal.
Sometimes it takes the form of amour
propre, which is something a little dif-
ferent from self love, although that is
the only English equivalent for the
phrase. But amour propre is a very deli-
cate thing to handle. Sometimes it is
hurt by being touched; sometimes it is
still more hurt by being left alone; some-
times such a person as this wants to be
sympathized with, and yet is irritably
watchful lest the sympathy they de-
mand should seem to place them at fault
for their misfortune.

You say to such a one, "How could
you trust that man when every one said
he was dishonest?" and the sufferer nearly
flies in your face with the assertion
that she is no more credulous than other
people; but, etc.

It is, in one word, a very dangerous and
delicate matter either to give or receive
sympathy, and all I can say is, remem-
ber, like fire, water and gunpowder, it is
a good thing so long as you know how to
manage it, but if you don't—for heaven's
sake, let it alone.

Chicago's First Child.

In winterless southern California a
pleasant faced old lady, Mrs. Susan Wi-
nans, is restfully passing the close of
life. Children and grandchildren attend
her, nor blizzards nor cyclones nor bit-
ting cold nor scorching heat annoy.

Yet midst wars, massacres and priva-
tions of every kind her life began. At
the Fort Dearborn massacre of 1812 her
baby ears heard terrible sounds, and her
innocent eyes may have seen father and
brother murdered. At a mother's breast
she clung close that no savage club



MRS. SUSAN WINANS.

might bruise her tender frame. Then
came wigwam life and weary marching
from Indian camp to Indian camp. Thus
the first year of her life passed away,
and the fair haired child little dreamed,
when at last safe in her grandfather's
house, that where her eyes first saw the
light some time would stretch a monster
city, some time be held an exposition on
so magnificent a scale as to astonish the
world, and this be her renown—that she
was the first white child born where
now tower Chicago's myriad blocks.

But having felt all of life's vicissitudes
in western wilderness, now, in her rose
covered cottage in southern California,
she peacefully waits the end.

You will always find a full supply of
fresh fruits and vegetables at W. A.
Coffin & Co.'s store, 143 South Eleventh
street.

In the District Court of Lancaster County,
Nebraska,
WILLIAM BARR, Plaintiff,
vs.
ROBERT E. LAMB, Defendant.

To Robert E. Lamb, non-resident defend-
ant: You are hereby notified that on the
30th day of March, 1933, William Barr filed a
petition against you in the District Court of
Lancaster County, Nebraska, the object and
prayer of which is to quiet the title of lot
numbered five (5), in block numbered fifty-
eight (58), in the city of Lincoln, county of
Lancaster and State of Nebraska, in said
petition you declare that whatever claim
you may have in or to said property is with-
out right, and that you have no right, title,
interest or estate in or to said premises or any
part thereof, and for such other and further
reliefs may be just and equitable.

You are required to answer said petition on or before
Monday, the first day of May, 1933.

By Pound & Burr, his Attorneys, 4-1-3

In the District Court of Lancaster County,
Nebraska,
LUCY T. MILEY, Plaintiff,
vs.
JOHN W. MILEY, Defendant.

To John W. Miley, nonresident defendant:
You are hereby notified that on the 10th day
of March, 1933, Lucy T. Miley filed a peti-
tion against you in the District Court of Lan-
caster County, Nebraska, the object and pray-
er of which is to obtain a divorce from you on the
ground that you have wilfully abandoned
said plaintiff without good cause for the term
of two years last past, and that being of suf-
ficient ability so to do you have wantonly and
cruelly refused and neglected to provide suit-
able maintenance for said plaintiff, you are
required to answer said petition on or before
Monday, the first day of May, 1933.

By Pound & Burr, Her Attorneys, 4-1-3

A Moment's Examination

MAY

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YOU
MONEY

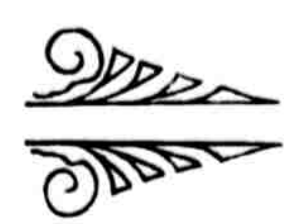
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